

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 15 and 17, claims 1 to 4, 11, 14, 16, 18 and 19 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed on November 5, 2004. An initialed copy of the PTO-1449 paper that was submitted with the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement has not been returned. Applicant respectfully requests an initialed copy of that PTO-1449 paper with the next Office communication. Enclosed herewith are courtesy copies of the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement and accompanying PTO-1449 paper obtained via the PAIR system, with each of the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement and PTO-1449 indicating receipt by the Office on November 5, 2004.

II. Allowed Claims 1 to 4, 11, 14 and 16

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 1 to 4, 11, 14 and 16 are allowed. Since claims 18 and 19 depend from claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claims 18 and 19 are also allowable.

III. Rejection of Claims 15 and 17 to 19 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 15 and 17 to 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,193,332. While Applicant does not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claims 15 and 17 have been canceled herein without prejudice, thereby rendering moot the present rejection with respect to claims 15 and 17. As regards claims 18 and 19, since claims 18 and 19 depend from claim 1, which was indicated to be allowed, it is respectfully submitted that claims 18 and 19 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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